

Effective Multilateralism  
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It is truly a delight for me to be here with you today in Austin. This is a very important city to me, and much of what I do in Washington and New York is based on knowledge and principles I learned here. I would like to thank Susan Moore for her outstanding work as a public delegate of the United States to the UN General Assembly, and for her immense efforts to put together the program here. The concert last night was superb, an ideal way to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I would like to express my personal gratitude to our special guest, U.S. Cultural Ambassador Mary Wilson, who has traveled the world on behalf of the Department of State and who exemplifies the American concepts of hard work, volunteerism, and concern for our fellow man. I would also like to welcome our guests from Pakistan, Shumalia, Nauman, and Shakeel, who have helped us celebrate the ideals of freedom and democracy.

The noble vision for the United Nations so eloquently set forth in the Charter signed 60 years ago this week is far from realization. In part this is because those who articulated that vision could not have foreseen the profound changes that have transformed the world since 1945.

The United Nations was created to enable us to confront jointly the common threats to our security, to our freedoms, and to the ability of all our citizens to aspire to economic prosperity and its benefits. Even with its shortcomings, the UN has served us well. Clearly, however, it needs improving. We all recognize this, and we all recognize that we have an opportunity, indeed a solemn historical responsibility, to make it work better.

The United States has invested much time and effort to analyze what ails the United Nations and what can be done to fix it. U.S. interest is not limited to government officials; UN reform is very much on the minds of the American people; they too want a strong United Nations. Your attendance here today signifies this interest.

At no time in history have we been more in need of effective international institutions. While I have been speaking to you, 35 people have died as a result of poverty—20,000 a day, one every 4 or 5 seconds. As many as a billion may have gone to bed hungry last night. Hundreds of millions live in fear of violence—from terrorists, from neighboring states, or even from their own governments.

As technological advances have brought us into closer contact with others around the globe, it has become clear that all the people of the world are our neighbors, and in many very real respects, their problems are our problems.

I should say right at the start that multilateralism is not, in and of itself, a foreign policy goal. It is a tool, and sometimes the best tool, for achieving certain policy goals. The

creation and maintenance of effective international organizations is an important way in which we expand the resources and capabilities available to deal with problems. It's not all that different from our maintenance of robust military capability—not a goal in itself—but a vital tool for ensuring our security.

There are three characteristics of effectiveness that the United States looks for in an international or multilateral institution.

The first is that such an institution should be underpinned by high ideals and values. Clearly, the United Nations and the specialized agencies in the United Nations system pass this test. Let me just read a few lines from the UN Charter (and yes, I actually carry it around with me!). “We the peoples of the United Nations” are “determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” determined “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person,” and “in the equal rights of men and women,” determined “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for...international law can be maintained, and” determined “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.” These are fine ideals indeed, and represent principles to which the people of the United States and our government are fully and profoundly committed.

The second characteristic is that multilateral organizations should actually do things to promote those high ideals. They should act in ways to effectively address the issues for which they have been created. They should not just talk about problems, and they should especially not do things that might give the appearance of action without actually addressing the problems at hand. This “effectiveness test” as I will call it, drives U.S. policy on everything from Security Council enlargement to peacekeeping or humanitarian intervention in the Sudan, to the International Criminal Court, to control of weapons of mass destruction, to achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

The last important characteristic of effective multilateral organizations is that they must be well-managed and efficient users of the resources that governments entrust to them. We should be able to count on honesty and the highest standards of personal integrity in the UN staff. We should be able to have confidence that the money we provide is being used in the best way to promote goals with which we agree—not just being wasted. The UN, frankly, has dropped the ball in recent years on this score. We are confronted not only with the oil-for-food scandal and the rape of innocent women and children by UN peacekeepers, but with the forced resignation of the High Commissioner for Refugees following charges of sexual harassment, embezzlement of \$3 million from the World Meteorological Organization, and illegal contracting practices and kickbacks at the World Intellectual Property Organization.

There are, of course, thousands of UN system employees who are hard working, dedicated and self-sacrificing, and who are scrupulously honest. But abuses like those I have mentioned are intolerable and must be dealt with firmly and immediately. We must ensure that procedures are in place to promote and guarantee the highest standards of ethical behavior by UN employees.

So there you have the three things the U.S. believes essential for effective multilateralism: commitment to high ideals, the capacity to actually do things, and honest and efficient administration.

Now, let's talk about U.S. foreign policy priorities, and consider the tools we have available to achieve them. Some, clearly, are more susceptible to effective action through a multilateral approach than others.

### Security

The top U.S. foreign policy priority today, and any day, is preserving our national security. America's large investments relative to other countries in highly trained military manpower and technologically advanced equipment have brought us, for the time being, a significant level of security from traditional military challenge. Thus, the most immediate threat to the American people is from terrorism. The goal of eliminating terrorism underpins and reinforces a wide range of traditional foreign policy activities in both the security and economic fields. Let me give just a few examples.

The most dangerous form of terrorism is that which is undertaken or supported by states, so the top priority is to isolate, neutralize or eliminate regimes that promote or support terrorism. Sometimes this requires direct military action, as in Afghanistan or Iraq. Historically, such action has only been undertaken successfully by a nation state or a military alliance or coalition of nation states such as the United States put together for Afghanistan and the two Iraq wars. The international community has tried on a number of occasions to undertake military action through the UN Security Council, in places like the Congo, Somalia, Yugoslavia, Rwanda, or Haiti. Such actions have foundered because of the UN's inherent limitations, which include political, financial, and command and control constraints. At the moment, we are facing a possibly failing UN security operation in the Congo, and we have yet to secure UN agreement on a truly effective way to stop the genocide taking place in the Sudan. Hopefully, the resolution we passed recently establishing a peacekeeping operation in Southern Sudan will provide a more stable situation from which to address the atrocities in Darfur.

A second way we address terrorism is through a variety of economic or political sanctions on offending countries, groups or individuals. The most effective of these operations have involved control of assets and travel, to isolate or quarantine the country or individual in question. Examples of rogue states that have been at least partially controlled through such measures include Cuba, Libya and North Korea. Countries we have failed to control in this way include Iran and Iraq. Sanctions, to be effective, require broad participation by the international community, something that the United Nations would seem uniquely qualified to generate. But even the UN cannot succeed when some of its members choose to evade or violate sanctions regimes, whether for political or economic gain. The failure of sanctions on Iraq and the corruption of the Oil-For-Food program are good examples of sanctions regimes that have been undermined by UN members who had pledged to abide by them.

A third way we deal with terrorism is by securing international agreements on procedures that make terrorists' jobs harder. The UN system has proven very effective in securing international cooperation on such things as hardening cockpit doors, improving travel documents and identification processes, improving container safety or securing international mail. It has been much less successful in controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction, as witnessed by the failure of the IAEA and safeguards regimes in North Korea and Iran.

### Prosperity

The second great thread that underlies much of our foreign policy is economic prosperity. Internationally, the primary engine of economic growth is trade, and one would have to judge the World Trade Organization's support for trade liberalization and the opening up of markets a great success. The U.S. might have chosen the path of economic isolation as the road to economic prosperity and security. After all, we have a continent of natural resources and all the labor and capital we need to survive on our own. We understand, however, that even greater prosperity is possible in an interconnected world. We also understand that prosperous neighbors are better neighbors, and with transportation and communications technology shrinking the world, everyone has truly become a neighbor. So the U.S. has consciously chosen to promote openness and interconnectedness, and the result is the process we know as globalization.

A mention of globalization is exactly the right time to introduce the concept of cost/benefit analysis into the study of foreign policy, for in a world as complicated as ours, it is extremely rare to find a policy that is unambiguously and exclusively positive, with no negative side effects. Globalization's benefits include such things as greater overall economic prosperity and the increasing richness of our political and cultural lives as we are exposed to the vast knowledge and experience of others around the world. On the other hand, it promotes more rapid economic and social change, which, to be sure, promotes progress, but at the same time can disrupt traditional ways of organizing societies and economies. In the United States, we enjoy higher standards of living as a result of the lower prices we pay for goods and services in an open economy, but we suffer job losses in industries in which foreign producers are more efficient. The increasing neighborliness of societies helps promote respect for human rights and makes it increasingly difficult for authoritarian or repressive leaders to hide. It also makes our societies more vulnerable to terrorism or other disruptive influences from outside our borders. The prosperity we help build through promoting development in the poorest countries makes them more secure and peaceful, but the disruption of traditions and societal norms can also lead to a loosening of behavioral inhibitions that can lead to violence.

Again, the goal of all of this is to increase prosperity, both ours and our neighbors around the world. The UN, frankly, does a terrible job of promoting economic growth because it is wedded to government-focused, socialist ideologies of economic organization. The real resources for development are to be found within the private sector, both

domestically and internationally. Official development assistance provides a miniscule proportion of the resources developing countries can access for development, and such foreign aid can bring economic distortions and corrupting practices with it. Yet official development assistance is generally all the UN system wants to talk about on the economic front. On the other hand, we have found the UN to be a rather efficient way to provide emergency relief, humanitarian assistance and support for refugees and the United States provides about 35 percent of total UN resources in this area.

The UN has also proved to be an effective vehicle for promoting health and the fight against HIV/AIDS. The U.S. provides over half of total international resources to fight HIV/AIDS. We also hope, as evidenced by the President's decision to rejoin UNESCO, that the UN system can become an effective vehicle for promoting literacy and understanding between cultures. The UN is also a useful forum for providing some of the infrastructure of international commerce, for example through standardization of food safety regulations, aviation and maritime safety standards, protection of intellectual property rights, and the allocation of satellite space or radio frequencies.

Another important element in both prosperity and security is the protection of the environment. The U.S. approach to environmental protection emphasizes the importance of using market mechanisms to ensure that the most cost effective means of pollution control are undertaken. Of course, one of our greatest strengths is our vast capacity for research and the development of new technologies to make energy use both cleaner and more efficient, and the President has proposed an ambitious program in this area.

Unfortunately, the UN's efforts in the environmental area to date have sometimes been characterized by grand schemes, costly but ineffective regulation, or sloganeering. The UN has a very difficult time dealing with the scientific complexity of many environmental issues, and there is sometimes little patience for careful analysis when countries feel under political pressure to do something. On the other hand, when the science is clear and causes and effects well-documented, the UN can be an effective forum for negotiating solutions, as in the Montreal Protocol which controls the use of chlorofluorocarbons that threaten the ozone layer.

### Democracy

Finally, I want to talk about the last great theme of American foreign policy, and that is the promotion of democracy around the world. President Bush made this the focus of his second inaugural address, and it is at the core of what we are trying to do internationally. Democracy, of course, is not just the holding of elections. The world is littered with repressive governments that originally came to power via an election and then just stayed. Democracy is about creating societies in which every individual is empowered to act and think freely. From the U.S. perspective, and I think this sets us apart from many other countries, even some of our closest friends and allies, government is often seen as part of the problem rather than the solution to questions of peace, security, and prosperity. No foreigner really understands America or American foreign policy unless they understand the deep distrust of the power of government inherent in the checks and balances of our

Constitution, the federalist distribution of power within our country, and the importance to us of the Bill of Rights, a document designed to protect us from our own government. Many of the fault-lines between the U.S. and Europe, for example, are drawn over questions of the centralization of power in government or international institutions. Europeans generally want more government and more centralization, and the U.S. generally wants less. They are more willing to entrust important questions to bureaucracies and elites, even to the point of giving up national sovereignty in key areas of governance. Today this is reflected in European support for various schemes of world regulation and world taxation.

When America talks about promoting democracy, we are really talking about promoting individual freedom and liberty, with democracy being the very best form of government we know of to protect the rights of individuals while managing essential government functions. Democracy, of course, is also the only form of government that promotes the regular, predictable and peaceful transfer of power within societies. This alone is a huge step toward security and prosperity.

The UN has done a credible job of helping ensure peaceful elections in some countries, but its record in the promotion of the fundamental human rights that underpin democracy is poor. It is no surprise that reform of the UN Commission on Human Rights, chaired recently by Libya, is high on the agenda of the current UN reform process. So far, the UN, with its sad history of neutrality between democracies and totalitarian communist states during the Cold War, and with its membership roles dotted with non-democratic states even today, has not proven to be the best venue through which to promote democracy.

With these three themes in mind—security, prosperity, and democracy—let me briefly describe the U.S. priorities in the current UN reform process.

**Terrorism** – The U.S. believes that it is time for UN members to unequivocally outlaw acts of international terrorism, and one of our priorities is to complete negotiation of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. We also want the UN Summit this September, at which many of these reform proposals will be adopted, to condemn terrorist attacks against civilians and state clearly that there can be no justification for such attacks regardless of cause, motivation, or grievance.

**Peacebuilding** – All too often we have succeeded in ending violence somewhere in the world, only to see the country or region slide back into conflict. To address this problem, we support the creation in the UN of a Peacebuilding Commission, acting under the authority of the Security Council, to coordinate and oversee UN operations in countries making the transition from conflict to peaceful development.

**Development** – The U.S. wants the UN to do much more to help developing countries put in place the economic and legal structures and policies that will liberate the economic, entrepreneurial energies of their people, make their countries attractive locations for foreign investment, and help them integrate more fully into the international

trading system. The UN should be focusing on the elimination of corruption, establishment and protection of property rights, and eliminating stifling government regulation. In one developing country it takes 203 days to register a business, and more than 4 years to enforce a contract. With such barriers to business formation and entrepreneurship, there is little chance for development.

For countries that put the basic necessities in place, the U.S. is ready to provide generous foreign assistance to help them get ahead. U.S. official development assistance has almost doubled since 2000, to \$19 billion in 2004. The President has just announced his attention to double U.S. aid to Africa by 2010.

**Democracy** – At the 2004 UN General Assembly, President Bush suggested the creation of a UN Democracy Fund to help countries create the civil and political infrastructure of democracy. I am happy to announce that this U.S. reform priority was established on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Human Rights** – I talked before about the scandalous performance of the Human Rights Commission. The U.S. supports the abolition of the Commission, and the creation in its place of a smaller, standing Human Rights Council, to deal with urgent human rights problems whenever and wherever they occur, in cooperation with the Security Council if necessary. A key part of this reform is to change the process for selecting members of the Council, to ensure that only countries with a true commitment to human rights are elected.

**Management and Administration** – We are seeking a wide variety of fundamental management, oversight and budgetary reforms to increase transparency, accountability and efficiency in the UN Secretariat. A key proposal is to strengthen the independence of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, an initiative inspired by the U.S. Congress. We are pushing for strengthened oversight of UN Peacekeeping missions, a reduction in the cost and frequency of UN conferences, scaling back of the UN Department of Public Information, and sunset clauses for UN programs and activities.

Finally, I want to say a few words about Security Council reform – Though not a top U.S. priority, this is getting by far the most attention, primarily because of a determined effort by four UN member states—Japan, India, Brazil and Germany—to become permanent members of the Council. The U.S. is open to Security Council expansion, but rather than focus on individual candidates, we believe we should be discussing criteria for membership in the Council, and ways to make it more effective.

These are just some of the reform proposals that the U.S. is actively promoting in connection with this fall's UN Summit. We seek nothing less than a transformation of the UN, so that it can become stronger and more effective, and live up to the vision of its founders when they signed the UN Charter 60 years ago.

On a recent occasion at the State Department, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice charged all of us who work there in the following way. “Transformational diplomacy,”

she said, “is not easy. It means taking on new tasks, breaking old habits, working with people who are trying to make those transformations themselves, being partners with those around the world who share our values and want to improve their lives.”

This is our challenge. Over the coming months, a lot of effort is going to go into trying to transform the United Nations to make it more effective, more efficient, and to ensure that it stays true to its high ideals. There is a lot at stake for the United States, for other countries, and for the United Nations itself. But if we succeed, we will have greatly increased the likelihood of securing peace and prosperity for ourselves and our children.

Thank you.